

Safety, Health and Workers' Compensation Program Lesson Plan

Time Required: 4 hours

Workshop Objectives:

Upon completion of the workshop participants will be able to:

1. Identify the elements of DOL's Safety/Health and Workers' Comp. Program
2. Identify where, when, and how to get help from the Health Unit and Employee Assistance Program (EAP) and what services they offer to employees.
3. Outline management's responsibility for maintaining safe workplaces and the his/her responsibility for working safely.
4. Take appropriate steps following a work-related accident, injury, or illness.
5. Get technical assistance and have questions answered regarding safety/health or workers' compensation issues.

Resources Needed:

Materials

Pre-Test

Post-Test

Case Study Handouts to be prepared by Trainer

Equipment:

I. Welcome and Introductions

- A. Presenter(s)
Introduce yourself, giving details about your current position and any past experience that relates to this workshop. Introduce course structure with brief background. Welcome the participants to the workshop.
- B. Participants
Ask participants to introduce themselves, stating their name, what they do and their expectations for the workshop. Record expectations on flip chart.
- C. Administer the Pre/Post test to determine the extent of current knowledge.

II. Workshop Objectives

- A. Acquaint participants with DOL policies re Safety/Health/Workers' Comp.
- B. Identify elements of DOL's Safety/Health/Workers' Compensation Program.
- C. Describe services offered by the local Health Unit, the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) and Fitness/Wellness Programs. Identify where, when, how employees obtain those services.
- D. Inform participants of management's responsibilities and rights.
- E. Inform participants of their responsibilities and rights.
- F. Educate participants on how to stay safe, healthy, well and on the job.

III. Overview of the Department's Safety/Health and Workers' Compensation Programs

- A. Why do accidents happen?
- B. What are hazards and what causes them?
- C. Three steps to safety: Recognizing hazards; reporting hazards; controlling hazards.
- D. Roles and responsibilities: management's and yours.

IV. Safe Work Practices (Topics presented in alphabetical order)

- A. Air Quality and Ventilation
- B. Electricity
- C. Emergency procedures
- D. Entrances and Exits
- E. Ergonomics: Jobs and workstations fitted to people
- F. Hazard Communication
- G. Housekeeping

Safe Work Practices - continued

- H. Lifting tips.
- I. Medical procedures.
- J. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).
- K. Walking and Working Surfaces (Avoiding Slips/Trips/Falls).

V. Case Studies

VI. Questions and Answers

VII. Post Test

Safety, Health, and Workers' Compensation Program

(A Commitment to People)

There is no issue more important than the health and safety of Department of Labor employees. Therefore, it is the Department's policy to provide for its employees (and the visiting public) work places which are free from hazards that are likely to cause serious harm or injury. It is also the Department's policy to see that employees' rights are protected under the law following injury on the job.

Enforcement of these policies is part of the Department's unconditional commitment to protecting its greatest resource: its employees.

Management, employees, and employee unions -- working together -- can help to prevent the accidents, illnesses and injuries that take such a tragic toll among workers, their families, and the community and result in exorbitant compensation costs which could better be used to achieve the Department's mission.

U. S. Department of Labor
Safety, Health, and Workers' Compensation Program

AGENDA

- I. Welcome and Introductions. Administration of Pre/Post Test.
- II. Workshop Objectives
- III. Overview of the Department's Safety/Health and Workers' Compensation Programs
 - A. Why do accidents happen?
 - B. What are hazards and what causes them?
 - C. Three steps to safety: Recognizing hazards; reporting hazards; controlling hazards.
 - D. Roles and responsibilities: management's and yours.
- IV. Safe Work Practices
- V. Case Studies
- VI. Questions and answers
- VII. Post Test

I. Overview

A. Accidents

Why do “accidents” happen? So-called “accidents” usually are not accidents at all. An accident is something that is unexpected and can not be prevented. Most illnesses and injuries in the workplace occur because of known causes called hazards. If hazards are present, then a near miss, illness, injury, or fatality can be expected.

B. Hazards

What causes hazards?

In the workplace, hazards are created by UNSAFE CONDITIONS and/or UNSAFE ACTS.

“Unsafe Conditions” refers to the state of:

- Workstations
- Environment
- Tools and equipment
- Job processes

Examples of Unsafe Conditions are:

- Water or other liquids on the floor
- Lack of employee education or training
- Unguarded machinery
- Improperly stacked materials

“Unsafe Acts” refers to the behavior of people. Examples of unsafe acts are:

- Not using the handrail when descending stairs
- Spilling liquid on the floor and not cleaning it up or marking it
- Not wearing personal protective equipment
- Rushing or running through the building

What are Safe Work Practices?

Safe work practices have been developed to help protect employees against hazards in the workplace. This is one important aspect of the Department’s and it’s Union partners’ commitment to employee safety and health. A little further on, this text presents safe work practices. In addition to the safety procedures outlined in this text, workers should refer to their supervisors for specific safety practices at their locations or if they have additional questions or concerns.

C. Three Steps to Safety

The Department uses a three step process of hazard recognition, reporting, and control.

Step 1: Recognizing Hazards.

The Department can be an active, busy place. People, materials, and equipment can be in constant motion. As a result, employees can be exposed to a number of hazards as they stand, sit or move from place to place on the job. Employees' health or safety depend on their ability to recognize hazards and know what to do if a hazard exists. They should always be aware of hazards at their workstations. However, they should also be alert to hazards when they are in other areas of the buildings in which they work.

Here is a checklist employees (and supervisors) can be given to check for hazards:

Can I come in contact with any energy source?

- electricity
- chemicals
- heat/cold
- radiation
- air pressure
- gases
- steam
- gravity

Can I come in contact with any hazardous materials?

- chemicals
- fumes
- gases
- air pollutants
- other hazardous materials

Can I get struck by anything?

- moving or flying objects
- falling material

Can I be caught in, on, or between anything?

- pinch points
- protruding objects
- stationary or moving objects

Can I slip, trip, or fall?

- on the same level
- to a lower level
- on liquid that might spill
- on wires on the floor
- on frayed carpeting

Can I be injured by poor job design?

- frequent or awkward motion
- stressful posture
- computer set too high or too low
- chair inappropriate for my body size

Step 2: Reporting Hazards

Once a hazard is recognized, it must be reported.

Reporting hazards is one of the most important ways employees can help maintain a safe workplace.

Often an employee can spot problems sooner than anyone else because they are very familiar with workplace conditions.

- Report hazards in work areas to the supervisor.
- Report hazards outside the work area to the supervisor of that area.
- Report uncorrected hazards to your Safety and Health Manager.
- Inform your Safety and Health Committee or your union person of reported hazards.

Step 3: Controlling Hazards

Once a hazard has been recognized and reported, the next step is controlling it.

Unlike hazard recognition and reporting, in which employees play an important role, hazard “control” is the responsibility of DOL management.

- The Agency Head has a responsibility to ensure that his/her Agency has an effective system for controlling workplace hazards.
- The supervisor must initiate the use of this system whenever he or she becomes aware of a hazard.

D. Roles and Responsibilities

Secretary's Order 5-95 outlines the roles and responsibilities of DOL management and employees in maintaining safe and healthful workplaces as well as safe and healthy employees.

- The Assistant Secretary for Administration and Management is responsible for establishing, administering and managing the Department's safety and health, workers' compensation, employee assistance, health services, fitness/wellness, and drug-free workplace programs through the Safety and Health Center.
- DOL Agency Heads are responsible for the safety and health of all employees who work in their Agency. DOL Agency Heads are also responsible for appointing a Safety and Health Manager who is technically competent to recognize and abate all hazards found in the workplace and to assist management and employees carry out their respective roles.
- DOL managers and supervisors are responsible for ensuring that all DOL workplaces are regularly inspected to identify and eliminate hazards; for ensuring that employees have the education, equipment and resources to keep themselves safe and healthy; and for enforcing workers' compensation mandates.
- DOL employees are responsible for performing their duties in the safest possible manner; wearing personal protective equipment when necessary; properly using tools, equipment, furniture provided; immediately reporting hazards, accidents injuries and illnesses; and participating in safety/health education and training.

Secretary's Order 5-95 governs the various and integrated elements of the Department's total safety, health and workers' compensation program. Those integrated elements are:

- Occupational Safety and Health Program.
- Health Services Program.
- Employee Assistance Program.
- Fitness/Wellness Program.
- Drug-Free Workplace Program.
- Workers' Compensation and Return-To-Work Program.

II. Safe Work Practices

Topics under this Section are presented in alphabetical order for ease of reference. Employees should be able to answer “yes” to each question; a “no” answer means a hazard exists and should be reported to their supervisor immediately.

AIR QUALITY AND VENTILATION

Dusts, vapors, mists, gases, smoke, and fumes from toxic substances can be extremely hazardous. Most DOL work spaces are in office settings; thus such toxic substances are normally not present. Nevertheless, from time to time, DOL employees do raise air quality complaints. Therefore, it is appropriate to inform new employees that if they suspect they are being exposed to air quality or ventilation problems, they should report that information to their supervisors.

ELECTRICITY

New employees should be informed that electrical hazards are one of the most serious threats to employee safety. They can help prevent injuries by recognizing and reporting suspected electrical hazards. Checklist:

- Are all disconnected switches in good repair and clearly marked?
- Are electrical panels closed and properly identified?
- Are plugs, cords, and switches in good repair, with no bare wires?
- Are electrical cords out of aisles where they might be damaged by vehicles or tripped over?

EMERGENCIES

In an emergency, every second counts. Knowing emergency procedures -- that govern the building in which they are employed -- will enable employees to respond quickly and appropriately:

- They should ask their supervisor for a copy of the Occupant Emergency Plan for the building in which they work.
- They should learn the location of all emergency exits.
- They should learn the location of all medical, fire, and emergency equipment.
- If another employee is injured, they should be informed that they should go to get help.
- They should be told not to block the access required by fire or emergency equipment with office equipment, boxes or other materials.

ENTRANCES AND EXITS

Employees must be able to enter and exit from work areas easily and quickly -- especially in emergency situations.

Hazard checklist. If they can answer “no” to any of these questions, they should report the hazard to their supervisor:

- Are entrances and exits free of obstacles?
- Are exit signs clearly visible and well lit?

ERGONOMICS: FITTING JOBS TO PEOPLE

What is Ergonomics? Generally means: fitting jobs to people, not people to jobs. Some jobs fail to allow for the physical limits of the individual who performs that job. Poorly designed workstations, for example, require employees to work in ways that may cause excessive physical stress and strain. In these cases, employees may have to:

- Repeatedly bend or stretch to reach computers, telephones, work tools, etc.
- Walk, lift, or carry boxes or other loads over long distances.
- Bend hands or wrists painfully to use work tools, such as keyboards.
- Squint to read fine or electronic print.

Work requirements like these take their toll on employees. The short term effects might include discomfort, fatigue, eye strain, aches and pains. In addition, when employees are tired, uncomfortable, or in pain, they may become distracted, increasing their risk of accident or injury. Over the long term, such working conditions may lead to serious injury, being placed on Continuation of Pay (COP), and ultimately being placed on the Workers' Compensation rolls.

Ergonomics uses the knowledge from many different sciences to understand the effects of poor job design and to identify job stresses that may cause excessive fatigue, illness or injury. Once these stresses are identified, they may be reduced by changes in job method, work practices, workstation, furniture or equipment. This is how Ergonomics fits jobs to people.

HAZARD COMMUNICATION

Federal law was enacted to protect employees from hazardous chemicals and materials used in the workplace. The standard requires that each employee who could be exposed to a hazardous chemical understands the potential health effects of that chemical and knows precautions to follow in order to prevent exposure. New employees should be informed that DOL Safety and Health Managers have a formal training program available for use with employees whose jobs might expose them to hazardous materials.

HOUSEKEEPING

A dirty or disorderly workstation is a hazardous workstation. New employees should be informed of this and encouraged to comply. They should be advised to:

- Keep their work areas clean and orderly.
- Clean up all spills and leaks immediately.
- Throw wastepaper or trash into proper containers.
- Place oily rags in approved metal containers.
- Keep tools in correct places.
- Keep machines and tools well maintained and free of debris.
- Store materials properly.
- Keep desk and file cabinet drawers closed.

LIFTING TIPS

Back injuries can be very serious and they are a common event both at home and at work. Poor lifting techniques can lead to back injuries or can make an existing injury more serious. To help prevent stress on the lower back, new employees should be advised to:

- Determine if they should be lifting or if that is the duty of other employees.
- If appropriate, size up the load before lifting (get help if necessary).
- Get as close to the load as possible.
- Grasp the load firmly.
- Lift while keeping the load as close to their body and with their back as straight as possible.

MEDICAL PROBLEMS

Employees who are injured on the job are expected to get immediate medical assistance. They are responsible for following these general procedures:

- Know where the closest DOL-sponsored health facility is and how to get there.
- Know how to summon help in case of a medical emergency.
- Have foreign bodies removed from eyes by medical personnel only.
- For skin or eye contact with any corrosive liquid, flush the body area with large amounts of water for at least fifteen minutes while removing contaminated clothing. Then obtain medical treatment.
- Report any illness, headache, or nausea to their supervisor and to medical personnel.
- Report all accidents or injuries to supervisor.
- Accurately, completely and honestly fill out appropriate forms supplied by supervisor.

PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT

Some DOL jobs call for Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to protect employees from hazards they may be exposed to in their work. New employees should be told to utilize all PPE supplied by DOL management to protect their eyes, ears, head, hands, feet, their whole body.

WALKING AND WORKING SURFACES (AVOIDING SLIPS/TRIPS/FALLS)

This is the largest category of accidents experienced by DOL employees. Clean and orderly walking surfaces help protect people from slip, trip and fall hazards. Here is a checklist to give new employees: If they answer “no” to any of these questions, they should be told to report the hazard to their supervisor:

- Are floor surfaces clean and in good repair?
- Are floor surfaces free of slip, trip, and fall hazards?
- Are delivery, assembly areas and platforms clean and well maintained?
- Are aisles clear of materials and equipment?
- Do you know where the little yellow tent hazard markers are?